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ABSTRACT

Data on illegal immigration from Mexico into Texas provide accurate information on the impact of this immigration on the generally underfunded and understaffed border school districts in the state. Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics show 20 million illegal immigrants in the United States. A more scientific estimate is 4 million, 2.7 million of which are from Mexico; 675,000 Mexican illegals are estimated to live in Texas. Recent studies suggest that most Mexican illegals are males seeking work. When employed, they earn less and work longer hours than legal workers. Over 70 percent of these illegal workers pay federal income and social security taxes. In contrast, only 1 percent or less receive welfare payments, food stamps, or federally funded job training. Texas Education Agency estimates suggest that as many as 51,348 immigrant children were enrolled in Texas schools in 1976-1977. A more accurate figure is 25,000. This number places strains on school administrators, finances, programs, facilities, and personnel. Thus more resources are needed. Attached tables provide Texas Education Agency enrollment statistics for 1975 to 1977 and the author's estimates of immigrant enrollment for 1981. (PB)

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"IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON THE SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS"

Dr. Gonzalo Garza
Associate Superintendent for Instruction
Austin Independent School District

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of School Administrators in Atlantic City, New Jersey, from February 25-28, 1983.

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Legal and illegal immigration to the United States from Mexico has been a fact of life for over one hundred years. Mexican migration patterns reflect economic and political developments in that country. Around the turn of the century, the Mexican Revolution resulted in a mass exodus of Mexican citizens to this country, primarily Texas. Recently, economic conditions in Mexico have created a large outmigration of its citizens to the United States. Since 1965, this flow has accelerated and produced various social and economic problems in this country and raised a number of controversial legal and moral issues which are currently being hotly debated at the local, state, and national levels.

The impact of Mexican migration into Texas, and specifically along the border and in the larger inland cities, has created a series of educational problems and needs in many school districts in those areas. The continued and accelerated influx of Mexican immigrants - legal and illegal - has put a burden on border school districts in terms of providing additional educational facilities to meet the needs of all students in these districts. There are limited data regarding such impact on school funding, school programs and school personnel, and on alien children themselves. Concurrent with this new problem, most of the school districts affected already were faced with problems of their own: a low tax base, low socio-economic levels among area residents (overcrowding in relatives' homes), and lack of adequate facilities (water, electricity, sewage, etc.) and personnel to meet current needs.

The past few years have seen a growing controversy concerning the education of children of illegal aliens. In recent months, this controversy has been highlighted by extensive media coverage, with television and radio stations transmitting news programs on this topic, and newspapers and magazines publishing extensive information.

Unfortunately, it appears that much of the coverage given to this topic and many of the arguments promulgated, both pro and con, are based on emotional reactions to the problem, conclusions based on erroneous information, and information based on myth rather than the scientific collection of data.

Very little reliable information is available on illegal aliens. The nature of this population makes it difficult to study. Attempts to gather data are hampered by the underground characteristic of the illegal, but also by governmental and economic interests in the population concerned. Therefore, estimates on the number of illegal aliens in this country may range from four to twenty million, depending on who is doing the estimating and the purpose of the estimate. The past practice of collecting estimates from district offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service when such estimates also form the basis for budgetary considerations and staff allocations most probably produced inflated counts of up to five times the number of illegals that probably exist. More scientific estimates of the number of illegal aliens in this country indicate that there are some 4 million illegal aliens in the U.S. with approximately 2.7 million of them being from Mexican extraction. Since studies indicate that one-fourth of all illegal Mexicans are located in the State of Texas, it is plausible that there are 675,000 illegal Mexicans residing in the State of Texas.

One of the most scientific studies of illegal aliens was conducted by David S. North and Marion F. Houstoun of Linton and Company,

Washington, D.C. This study is based on the analysis of 793 apprehended illegal aliens, 481 of which were Mexican. The data from this study indicate that 90% came to the U.S. to get a job, 91% were male, 17% had spouses in the U.S., but only 5% had illegal spouses in this country. The Mexican illegal alien averaged a $117 weekly income, though he worked more (8.6 hours per week more) than legal workers in this country. About 24% of the illegals received illegal wages; that is, less than the minimum wage prescribed by law.

Information on the illegals apprehended indicated that 73% paid federal income taxes, 77% paid social security, and 44% paid some form of hospitalization insurance.

In contrast, one-half of 1% received welfare payments, 1% obtained food stamps, 1% participated in U.S. funded job training programs, and 4% collected unemployment insurance. Though 27.4% received medical attention, 83% of those who received medical services paid for the medical services with their own funds, their medical insurance, or through their employer. Thus, only 4.7% of the illegal aliens received free medical attention.

Information concerning the children of illegal aliens obtained in this study also deviates from common sterotypes. Only 3.7% of the illegal aliens had children in American schools. Since it has been estimated that there are 675,000 illegal Mexicans in Texas, the number of children one would expect to find is 25,000; substantially lower than the number estimated by the Texas Education Agency. This figure is highly inflated since only 29% of the aliens who had spouses in this country had illegal spouses; or of the 25,000 children, 71% were of spouses legally residing in the U.S. Therefore, after subtracting probable legal residents, the total number of illegal children in Texas may be no more than 7,243. Yet to be subtracted from this number are children not of school age, and since the average age of the illegal adult apprehended was only 28.5, the

number of pre-school age children may be substantial. (See attachment)

The impact it has in School District Administration at the different levels are:

I. Central Administration - Superintendent

A. Procedures for added personnel - finding teachers is a big problem
25 children - 1 more classroom
1 portable - $40,000 to $50,000

B. Teacher comes through A.D.A. - most school districts already above

C. Places a severe strain on resources, both in programs and facilities.

II. Instruction

A. Establish programs to meet the needs of these children, Bilingual, E.S.L., S.S.L etc.

B. Add a special teacher, nurse, counselor - difficulty in acquiring certified personnel.

C. Children generally don't know how to read or write.

D. Provide staff development for special training to help teacher and principal and other staff.

III. School Administration - Local Campus Level

A. Morale and frustration - teacher complaints.

B. Not being able to segregate or isolate.

C. Accepting children at all times of the year - one family can come in with four children that are legal and three that are illegal. What do you do? You act as God, said one superintendent. You close your eyes, said another. Puts a burden on utilities: water, electricity, sewage, etc. Overcrowding classrooms and other facilities.

D. Teachers wanting to leave the profession because of frustration, burn-out, stress, etc. Teachers of Bilingual Education have double (no stipend) load - planning (lessons) and teaching in two languages.

E. Educationally disadvantaged - children generally are disadvantaged because of lack of schooling in Mexico and the U.S. School is completely foreign to them.

F. Socially disadvantaged - coming from the farm to a community, to a country quite foreign to them - language, customs, environment, traditions, nationalities, etc. Health habits are different. Poor self-image.

G. Health Clinics - immunization, shots, etc.

H. Psychological Services - counseling - testing, etc.

I. Special Education - where do we put them?

IV. Transportation - most will need transportation.

V. Cafeteria Services - most of the children will be on free lunch.

What's being done?

School districts will need more resources to meet the needs - not only of our own children but those children that come to us totally unprepared.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

Survey of Alien/Immigrant Students Born in Mexico
Comparison of 1975-76 and 1976-77 Results

		1975-76	1976-77
1.	Total number of alien/immigrant students enrolled	44,799	51,348
2.	Number of alien/immigrant students first year of enrollment in the district	11,733	10,534
3.	Total statewide enrollment	2,812,888	2,839,595
4.	Statewide percentage alien/immigrant students of total enrolled	1.59	1.8
5.	Does the presence of alien students in district cause fiscal or other problems?	Yes -- 117 No -- 942	Yes -- 175 No -- 939
6.	Priority order for relief from problems resulting from increasing enrollments of immigrant students		

BROWNSVILLE 1 PORTABLE EVERY 18 DAYS

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
• Stricter enforcement of immigration regulations	99	11	8	4	1	152	10	14	4	0
• Provision for federal impact fiscal resources	8	45	27	8	1	22	91	28	12	3
• Provision for state impact fiscal resources	11	23	42	8	0	18	44	80	9	0
• Provision for alien students made through local resources	2	2	9	54	9	2	6	14	78	20
• Other	13	5	0	2	11	9	14	1	15	20

ALIEN STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1981

Over 1,000

San Antonio	1,005
Brownsville	1,166
Dallas	1,515
Houston	5,695
McAllen	1,000
Fort Worth	1,150

500-399

Ector County	892
El Paso	627
Ysleta	517

400-499

Pasadena	499
Mission	413

300-399

Socorro	360

201-299

San Benito	252	Donna	285
Lamar Consolidated	237	Edcouch-Elsa	229
Aldine	299	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo	289
Galena Park	240	Sharyland	229
Goose Creek	238	Windham	209
Austin	245		

100-199

Harlandale	143	Edgewood	172
Harlingen	170	Point Isabel	159
Grand Prairie	127	Seminole	102
Cypress-Fairbanks	109	Katy	140
Progreso	143	Weslaco	114
Midland	164	Rio Grande City	168

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